

Have you heard of intergenerational trauma?

It's a pretty hefty phrase that describes a phenomena where unaddressed pain and patterns of limited thinking travel from one generation to the next. In this paper, I'll talk about what it means to me, how to notice and correct its effects in your life, and my experience of it. The importance of this topic is in opening to see where you may have named things in your life as problems that are actually symptoms of intergenerational trauma.

As far as I can tell, most people experience it. The word 'trauma' is usually saved for big events that others can see and validate as suddenly or exceptionally painful. When I'm talking about intergenerational trauma in this paper, I mean those experiences AND I want to expand the topic to include ways of acting and thinking that don't allow someone to live their life fully. Not feeling ok to enjoy who you are naturally and not being able to fully live your life is pretty traumatic, right?

Both ends of this trauma spectrum are personally important to me. The invisible templates I'll talk about in this paper shaped my life in huge, undeniable ways.

Before we begin this discussion, I want to emphasize the gifts in trauma. Yes, gifts. Whether we're talking about painful events or the chronic discomfort of not being free to be yourself. These experiences are blessings as soon as you begin to consider that they might be. These 'wrong' things can actually be 'right' when you allow the possibility that they might be.

While you move through this material, see if you can let both the bad and good of your trauma exist at the same time. Yes, you were hurt. Yes, it still hurts. Yes, there might be messes. AND yes, you have gained or grown uniquely and powerfully in it all.

The phrase 'Intergenerational trauma' came to my attention through an email about a new Master Class. You might have heard of them. They're courses by experts available to take online. I thought, "Great! A recognizable segway to explain to my family what I did for myself and do for others."

My intention with this piece is to illustrate how unaddressed pain and patterns of limited thinking become invisible templates parents pass to children and how it's not such a big or scary thing to fix. I'll tell you how intergenerational can show up and the symptoms of it that are usually

mistaken for the problem. I want you to know that this phenomena isn't you nor is it your parents nor their parents. There is a way to look at it that frees you from shame and them from blame while you break these invisible templates for good.

Ideas of self and life learned during childhood are hard to recognize as they constitute the water we swim in for the rest of our lives. These most-used mental frameworks and ways of responding to life create an experience of the world that we don't nor can't consider an alternative for. It'd be like trying to see the glasses you use for seeing.

When parents neglect their child's mental, emotional, and environmental needs and then say to the child 'I love you,' the child learns a deep, invisible template for love. She also learns what she can expect from the world in terms of stability, respect, and resources. These ideas of life and self are transferred to the child without her having the ability or opportunity to ask if they are accurate or healthy.

You can see how that pattern plays out as the child grows into an adult that then selects unhealthy relationships, accepts poor treatment from authority figures, and neglects to care for themselves.

It's common that the person is able to think clearly and act successfully in other areas of their life, but somehow continues to experience problems that have 'obvious' and 'simple' solutions, such as 'to just stop doing the behavior.'

Often the 'problems' this person thinks they have are 'symptoms' of those impoverished stability, respect, and resources templates. This exemplifies the concept of intergenerational trauma as the adults responsible for creating these templates were like the recipients of them themselves. What does neglect in these conversations mean? The neglect covered here includes what you might commonly think of AND more subtle examples that often extend beyond the awareness of the neglect'er.

An example of that type of neglect is when the adult is not emotionally stable or available enough to create space for the child to be or feel their own emotions. The adult doesn't know nor can't imagine another way of being as he is acting from his own invisible templates.

From what I've seen, this neglectful-love template matters most as it pertains to self-love, which for a lot of people instead looks like self-abuse. Self-abuse in this conversation means an inability to take care of one's best interests, whether that be health, wealth, or love. We can sometimes see the effects of these patterns but the root of them is often invisible, especially to the affected person. In fact, they usually think the problem is something else.

My skillset and other types of therapy can correct self-abuse like this at the root, the impoverished mental and emotional invisible templates. This correction then translates to behaviors that are no longer self-abusive and the person is 'free' to make healthier choices that were obvious before but somehow always out of reach.

That's the moral of this story - there's a solution for people who feel like their behavior and lives are outside of their control. To me, it's very exciting because a person's quality of life can vastly and seemingly miraculously improve when the roots of these symptom-problems are seen for what they are. I'm proof this is possible and so are the lives of many of my clients.

To be extra clear, intergenerational trauma work is not a game of shifting blame but rather one of reaching for compassion, both for yourself and for the people in your generational lines. This expanded awareness and practice of forgiveness can and does break the chains of trauma.



If you want assistance in effectively applying these ideas, I'd love to provide it. I offer consulting and support packages that facilitate overhauls of invisible templates and the rooting and growing of new ones at [habitbook.com/transform](https://habitbook.com/transform) .

I'm also available for single sessions and have a course open for enrollment at [hereandnowschool.com](https://hereandnowschool.com) that begins to teach the skills necessary to work on your own templates.

To schedule an info call to see if I'd be a good teammate for you on this work, visit [linktr.ee/shayleedwards](https://linktr.ee/shayleedwards). You can also find information about packages, single sessions, and the here&now school there.

Most sincerely,  
Shay

PS. If you mention this post to me during your info call, you can receive \$50 off your entourage tuition or \$5 off a single session.

PPS. In full transparency, I have a perspective of life on earth that transcends even these ideas. i.e. We, as humans, are much more than we commonly believe and allow ourselves to be.